

MICHAEL GARVEY & RAY CHODOROWSKI

President & Vice President, The Dumbbell Man Fitness Equipment

The Dumbbell Man Fitness Equipment (TDM) specializes in the creation of commercial fitness centers in a variety of market segments. Serving luxury hospitality, multifamily and corporate locations, TDM offers design, supply, installation, after-sale service and preventive maintenance. They recently began offering services to select retail clients as well.

Owner Michael Garvey started the company in his Hermosa Beach apartment in 1990. He moved to the South Bay after attending Boston University and worked as a high school coach, fitness trainer, health club manager and gym owner before starting TDM. Michael and vice president Ray Chodorowski both have more than 30 years of experience in exercise equipment sales.

Ray's retail sales experience helped TDM pivot to business-to-consumer (B2C) services during the past year. Requests for home gyms helped keep the team busy and revenue sustained throughout the pandemic and shutdown.

WHAT FULFILLS YOUR TEAM MOST ABOUT THIS INDUSTRY?

"Providing quality commercial exercise equipment and creating better health and wellness opportunities is always rewarding. Having fun and watching the business grow is very satisfying. People of SoCal are very passionate about exercise."

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT YOUR LINE OF WORK?

"A common misconception is that we only sell dumbbells, but we have been very successful as a turnkey solution provider. However, The Dumbbell Man is a name no one could forget! Dumbbells are ubiquitous and spelled with two b's. There is only one Dumbbell Man."

TELL US ABOUT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE.

"TDM is present on most social media outlets and always looking to expand."

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE PROFESSIONALLY IN 2021?

"The goal in 2021 is to reconnect with all our commercial clients and expand the custom home gym niche we created here in the South Bay. We are now completing commercial projects for several clients (Chess Fitness, El Camino College, LA Galaxy, Bellagio Resort) and expanding our B2C portfolio with local developers and homeowners."

IS YOUR BUSINESS BACK TO A "NEW NORMAL" YET?

"Demand is back to normal, but the challenge continues with business operations and keeping employees and customers safe. The past year has been a test, but thanks to our team we have created solutions and new procedures that will benefit our staff and clients alike moving forward."

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU AND YOUR TEAM HELP CLIENTS FEEL THEY ARE IN GOOD HANDS?

"We are driven to create a five-star customer service experience. We are focused on using 30 years' experience while keeping up-to-date on trends and breakthrough products. Being honest with clients ensures they make educated equipment selections. Safety and a great exercise experience are always the top priority."

IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR WORK MAKE OUR COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE?

"The fitness amenity or gym space is a top priority for the markets we serve. Most clients look to our experience to create first-class exercise environments. People are always excited to see the new fitness center, and our staff is motivated by the positive feedback. It's great for morale for Team Dumbbell Man."

WHAT ARE YOUR BEST SECRETS TO SUCCESS?

"Pursue your passion, keep your promises and be nice to people."

WHAT SERVICES DO YOUR CLIENTS APPRECIATE MOST?

"Our clients appreciate our turnkey approach. From the start we collaborate with clients, architects and designers. We supply, install and provide service. We make it easy and keep it simple."

HOW DO YOU COPE WITH HIGHLY STRESSFUL SITUATIONS IN YOUR WORK?

"We have a small team with an enormous amount of experience. As we add staff, we make it clear: We work as a team, get the job done and have fun. We also have access to 10,000 square feet of warehouse space filled with stress-relieving exercise equipment. Great job perk!"

WHOM DO YOU SEEK OUT FOR ADVICE?

"After 35 years in the South Bay, I have been fortunate to meet many area business owners, friends and mentors. I am always seeking advice. I never learned anything while talking."

WHAT ARE THE KEY TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR?

"Tireless dedication, ability to embrace failure and using fear as a motivator."

IN WHAT WAYS DOES THE DUMBBELL MAN TEAM PURSUE HAPPINESS?

"Happiness is found in appreciating how fortunate we have been. We are grateful every day. We have a great staff, and we have created some great business relationships over 30 years. We are happy because we have exceeded all expectations, and we are still growing and having fun. It has been a great journey."

HOW DO YOU GIVE BACK AND SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED?

"We are proud of the support we have provided to charities and nonprofits in the communities we serve. It is one of my favorite parts of being a small business owner—doing well by doing good."

